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## PLASTIC RELIEF IN THE JAPANESE STYLE.

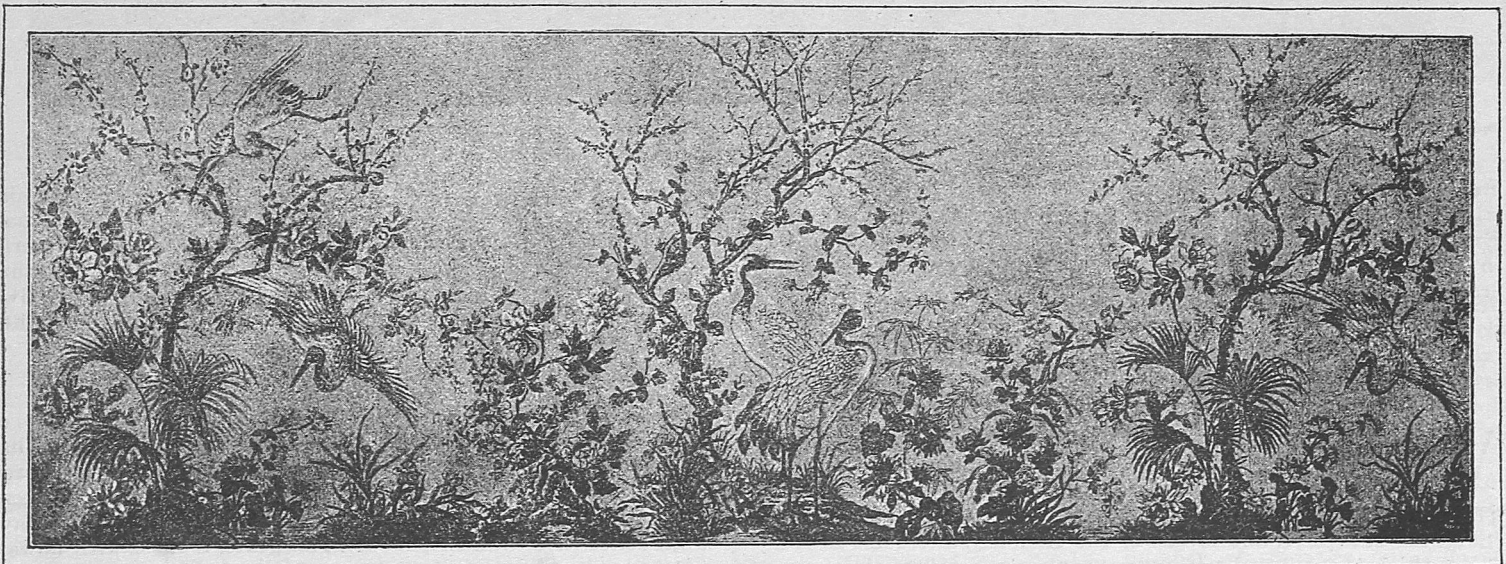
**D**ECORATORS have abandoned to a large extent the fresco pencil, and are adopting the more rapid and profitable style of decorating walls in plastic relief. This plastic relief may be modeled by hand, or by moulds, or it may be traced by means of collapsible tubes, or produced by means of stencils. The great fault of the first attempts at plastic relief in this country, was the terrible coarseness of designs. Men, apparently wholly unacquainted with decorative art, were allowed to place upon the walls, the products of an uneducated fancy, without the slightest spark of sentiment. A great deal of wall surface was finished in a style known as pluck work. This extraordinary method produced sharp points that resemble the spines that grow on the stalks of wild rose bushes. The cement was evidently floated upon the wall by means of a flat board, which was violently plucked away, leaving the relief to solidify in the shape of sharp spines. This was afterward decorated in variously colored bronzes, and the decorator pointed with pride to what he conceived to be a splendid idea. If a man, by accident or otherwise, were to fall against a wall of this description, he would have the flesh torn from his face, which certainly would not be a high recommendation for such work. Then again, immense blotches of plastic relief were laid on ceilings and walls, to represent mountains, clouds, lurid suns, rustic fences, and the like, and sometimes panels were constructed with natural tree effects, with immense birds sitting in the branches. These were decorated in gaudy colors, and owing to the enormous relief, were simply receptacles for dust, which did not fail to collect upon them in a manner sufficient to destroy all beauty they might have originally possessed. The decorators rapidly discovering the defect of such work, owing to its innate brutality, began to adopt a better style of design with a much less amount of relief. One decorator hit upon the bright idea of outlining scrolls and arabesques from collapsible tubes, and his idea has been copied by innumerable decorators with a certain amount of success. Still another idea was to lay a very heavy composition on the walls, and work it up with either combs or brushes into wave effects, with scrolls, overlapping discs, and vermicular contortions, generally produced upon blended grounds. A relief in this case of course was almost *nil*, and the effect was not very different from ordinary fresco work. Another decorator has conceived the bright idea of executing plastic relief by means of stencils, just as ordinary fresco stenciling is performed. Instead of paint, he uses a plastic cement, which is laid upon the wall in a thick state, quite filling the cut-out parts of the stencil. This, when it dries hard, produces an extremely fine relief, which, when decorated in various colored bronzes, produces a charming effect. We have seen work of this kind done upon ordinary ingrains, reproducing wall paper patterns, and the effect is very fine. In this manner, wall surfaces, dados, friezes and ceilings can be covered in an extremely low relief, and the designs may imitate lace, or other fabrics, or wood carving or embroidery. In fact the decorator we refer to, has used his stencil method in the production of extremely beautiful designs upon silk plush, which he calls damaskeened plush. The plastic relief adheres so tightly to the fibres of the fabric, that it may be

twisted or folded into any shape without detaching the composition. In this way, the thread-like effects of lace and embroidery work, the raised effects of damaskeened metals, and the pierced effects of silver filigree work, can be reproduced on walls with charming effect. But what we chiefly object to, in



DESIGN FOR PANEL IN PLASTIC RELIEF—JAPANESE STYLE.

all these methods of relief, is the puerility of the designs in which the work has been executed. It would seem as if the decorators are afraid to advance one step beyond the execution of small diaper patterns. When one considers the immense field of design that lies in the incorporation of animal figures with more or less naturalistic treatment of foliage, or arabesque



DESIGN FOR FRIEZE IN PLASTIC RELIEF—JAPANESE STYLE.



## THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

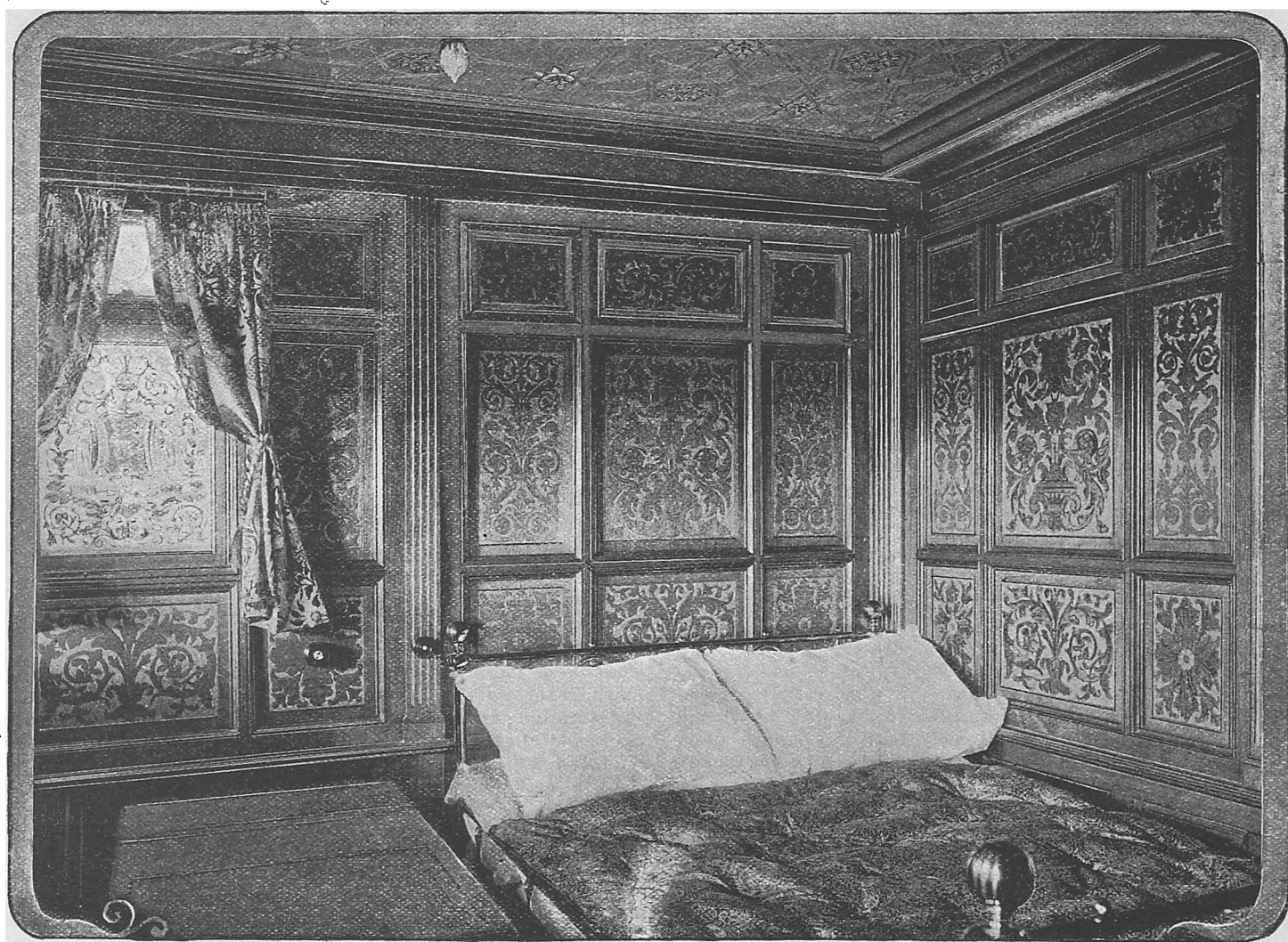
effects, it seems surprising that decorators refuse to take hold of so effective and rapid a method of gaining a reputation.

With a view of illustrating the kind of work we refer to, we present our readers herewith, with two designs, one being suitable for a panel, and the other being a wall frieze. Both designs are in the Japanese style. The panel design consists of Amorettes chasing a peacock. The remaining parts of the design, consist of tree branches and clouds. A stencil for such a design could very easily be made, or the design itself might be moulded by hand. We would recommend the relief to be tinted in natural colors. The ground of the panel might be cream or light blue, the leaves could be varying shades of moss green, or in fact, any soft green color that would not too sharply contrast with the blue of the ground. The Amorettes could be tinted in flesh colors, the clouds blended whites and grays, and the peacock in its natural vivid tints. Work of this kind would be much more artistic than filling a panel with a single scroll or diaper design.

The Japanese frieze could also be formed in low plastic relief by means of a stencil. The treatment is simply an idealization of nature. The ground might be a blending of terra-cotta to

gives fresh air in abundance, and is filled with a panel of painted glass. The window is further ornamented by very handsome curtains in silk brocade, attached by rings to a brass rod. The entire interior of the room is sheathed in panels of white oak, surrounded with heavy mouldings. Each panel is filled with Renaissance scroll designs, produced in a very simple manner by filling up the ground with gold leaf, the scrolls being thus produced in the natural color of polished oak. This forms at once a decoration constructed out of the material itself, which is of the same character as carved designs, and does away entirely with the use of paper, leather, or textile fabrics to the panels. The ceiling is filled with a Moorish arabesque produced in Tyne-castle tapestry relief, and decorated in white and gold. The impression of such a method of decorating a stateroom is one of solid elegance entirely in harmony with the triumphs of a mechanical civilization reaching out for the repose of art.

**A**LTHOUGH the quantity of real antique furniture articles of high artistic character is steadily diminishing, the demand appears to slacken. In many of our art furniture



A STATEROOM IN THE WHITE STAR STEAMSHIP "MAJESTIC."

cream, and all the high lights of the design could be emblevined with gold. This particular frieze was exhibited at the late Paris Exposition, and was designed by J. Petitjean, who produced it in three different color effects, the ground in each case being cretonne, water-green, and faience.

### A MODERN STATEROOM.

**W**E present our readers with an illustration of a stateroom in the new White Star steamship "Majestic," which appeared in *Ocean*, a late illustrated journal of travel. This stateroom is one of several on the upper deck, forward of the grand staircases, and is one of the choicest staterooms in the ship, which is furnished with every convenience. The stateroom is unusually large, and has a handsome brass bedstead. The window opens upon the promenade around the deck-house, and

stores we recognize the same pieces season after season remaining unsold and usually relegated to obscure corners. Individuals appear to have discovered that one half the amount formerly so readily expended on real, or simulated, antique furniture would secure, in most cases, modern makes equally attractive, and more suitable to their purpose, and not inferior in quality of workmanship.

**N**OW is the season for novelties in grates. One grate of decidedly original style, which projects into the room, has a bold semi-circular rolling top, decorated with colored tiles ranged between parallel lines of brass, each row of different lines; the supports which slope down to brass standards have floral relief tiles sunk in panels. The grate, if filled with flowers and ferns, has its true intent completely hidden, appearing as if designed to hold these garden and forest products, the chased thin flat steel bars having the aspect of containing bands.